

Background and Experience

Dieveniskės School of Technology and Enterprise is a small vocational education and training (VET) and secondary education (SE) school for learners aged 16-21 in Šalčininkai region (the south eastern part of Lithuania, specific for its multi-ethnic composition of local residents). Vocational training is provided in the field of engineering, catering and other services for persons. SE is provided in three languages: Lithuanian, Polish and Russian, as enrolling learners are graduates from local minority basic schools. Currently, 52 students are enrolled in modular vocational training programs in the field of engineering and catering. The vast majority of youth lack learning skills and also both the supposed level of key-competences and basic ICT skills' background (after their previous learning in basic schools). The School faces the risk of learners' drop-out and failures at maturity exams, while the majority of graduates succeed in acquiring professional competences on medium level. The majority of youth come from multilingual and multicultural environment, and from socially, economically and geographically disadvantaged families that lack self-confidence, communication skills, cultural competences and learning expectations. The School provides support to learners in a variety of ways, using non-formal education methods and applying them in project and non-formal activities.

In 2018, in cooperation with the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania and by the initiative of volunteering youth organizers, non-formal unit – Tolerance Education Centre (TUC) - was established at school to introduce values of tolerance to young people. These after school activities are usually guided and managed by non-formal educators (School's volunteering administrative staff) and by proactive teachers.

One of the aims of the non-formal education and youth work at Tolerance Education Centre in DTVM is to bring together young people from different backgrounds and support social change and intercultural dialogue, to improve their competences to gain access to social rights and to develop their capacity to access social resources. Experiential learning, learning by doing and non-formal education approaches have shown themselves as the most and the only successful both in formal education and training, and in activities of youth workers and youth participants.

(Hi) in the Kitchen. Youth Exchange via Erasmus+

Initiatives recently addressed by TUC lead non-formal education organizers to “(Hi) Stories in the Kitchen” (HSK) project. The goal of HSK is to create Digital Recipe Book where young people will have the opportunity to discuss issues of and acquire knowledge about intercultural dialogue, nationalism, racism, violence, discrimination and social exclusion, and through the use of active non-formal, Human Rights, and intercultural education approaches and fun activities in the form of workshops (experiential exercises, story-telling in the kitchen workshops, and digital café activities), group and individual co-operation, reflection and self-assessment etc., thus aiming at wakening proactive attitudes among young people in shaping their life projects and in making difference to the high level of social defragmentation in local societies inhabited by people of different ethnic, social, historical and cultural backgrounds. Also, the project is designed to initiate sustainable effects on transformative agency of young people, their organizations, and social environment.